

### REMARKS

Entry of this amendment and reconsideration of this application are respectfully requested.

Claims 22-48 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for allegedly being unpatentable over Shekhter. Applicants respectfully traverse.

The main difference between the cited references and the presently claimed invention are the reaction conditions. Shekhter uses gaseous magnesium for the reduction of Niob and/or Tantal oxides. Only one example (Example 18) is given for the reduction of  $\text{WO}_2$ ,  $\text{ZrO}_2$  and  $\text{V}_2\text{O}_3$  with gaseous magnesium (see Shekhter, col. 20).

Several samples, each approximately 25 grams, of  $\text{WO}_3$ ,  $\text{ZrO}_2$ , and  $\text{V}_2\text{O}_3$  were reduced individually with gaseous magnesium at  $950^\circ\text{C}$ . for 6 hours. The reduction products were leached with dilute sulfuric acid to remove residual magnesium oxide. The product was a black metal powder in each case. The tungsten and zirconium powders had oxygen contents of 5.9 and 9.6 W/W % respectively, including that the metal oxides were reduced to the metallic state.

Solid reducing agents are not contemplated by Shekhter.

In view of the foregoing, allowance is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the fees filed, asserted to be filed or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Deposit Account No. 50-0624, under Order No. NY-DNAG-313-US.

Respectfully submitted

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